

FINAL BILL REPORT

EHB 2579

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring classroom-based civics assessments.

Sponsors: By Representatives Upthegrove, Lantz, Dickerson, Appleton, Morrell, Hasegawa, Quall, Hunter, Haler, O'Brien, Murray, Hunt, Schual-Berke, Ormsby, Springer and Moeller.

House Committee on Education

Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education

Background:

The goals of the Basic Education Act include providing students with opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills essential to know and apply the core concepts and principals of, among other subjects, civics, history, and geography. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must develop Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALR's) in line with these goals.

Students in elementary, middle, and high school are required to learn the state's EALRs in social studies. The State Board of Education's regulations define social studies to include history, geography, and civics. By the 2008-09 school year, school districts must have assessments or other strategies in place to ensure their students have had an opportunity to learn the EALRs in social studies.

Washington law requires students to study the state and federal Constitutions before graduating from the state's public or private schools. In addition, public schools are required to have flag exercises at the start of the day, observe Temperance and Good Citizenship Day on January 16, and provide educational activities in observance of Veteran's Day.

Summary:

Social studies is defined to include history, geography, civics, economics, and social studies skills.

Beginning with the 2008-09 school year, students in grades 4, 5, 7 or 8, and 11 or 12 will complete a classroom-based assessment in civics. Districts have the option of selecting their assessment from a list provided by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) of approved assessments. School districts must submit a verification report to the OSPI documenting the districts' use of a classroom-based assessment in civics.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is directed to work with the county auditors' offices of up to 15 selected counties to develop a civics curriculum pilot project. The curriculum must include, but is not limited to: (1) local government

organization; (2) discussion of ballot measures, initiatives, and referenda; (3) the role of precincts in defining ballots, candidates, and political activities; (4) the roles and responsibilities of taxing jurisdictions in establishing ballot measures; and (5) the work of conducting elections. The OSPI is directed to develop a curriculum guide that incorporates ideas from other Washington civics education programs. The pilot project will operate for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years. The OSPI will provide an interim report to the Legislature by December 1, 2008, and a final report by December 1, 2009, regarding the results of the projects and recommendations, if any, for expansion of the project.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	83	15	
Senate	44	1	(Senate amended)
House	76	19	(House concurred)

Effective: June 7, 2006